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THE
GREEN VELVET DRESS

AND
THE BEAUTIFUL VILLA

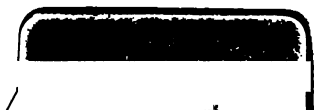


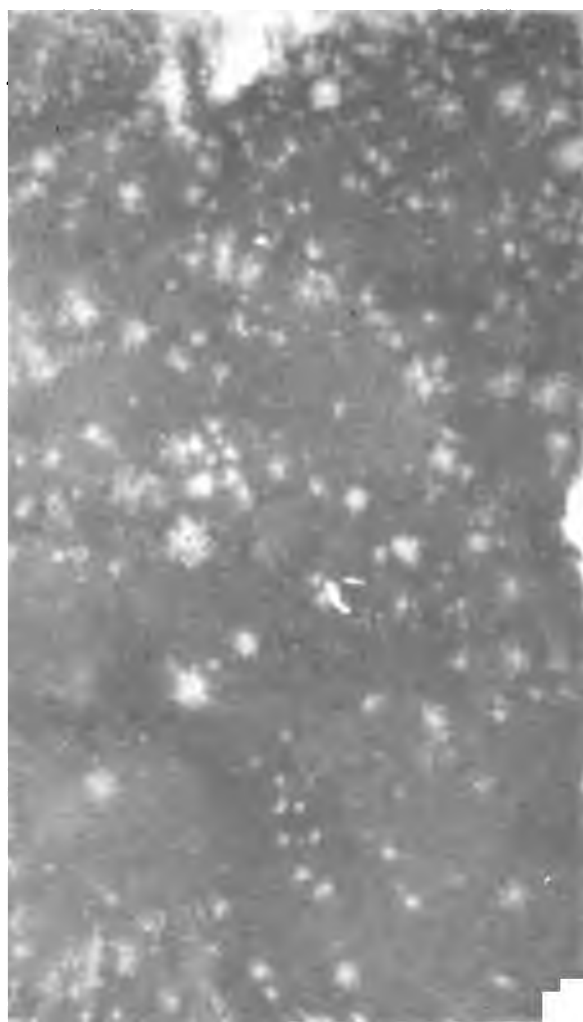
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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THE GREEN VELVET DRESS.

THE BEAUTIFUL VILLA.







JENNY AT THE MILLINER'S.

THE GREEN VELVET DRESS.

THE BEAUTIFUL VILLA.



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS,
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

1884.

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THE GREEN VELVET DRESS.

“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox
and hatred therewith.”—PROV. xv. 17.



THE WALK TO THE VILLA.

Page 28.

WRAP your cloak tight round you,
my lass; for the wind's bitter
cold this morning: and here—see

—you wouldn't be the worse of my bit of a shawl under it."

"Oh! but, mother, remember your rheumatics."

"I'm a'most right again, Jenny, and I ben't out in the cold," said the poor woman, stirring the few glowing embers which scarcely gave even the appearance of a fire.

"And come back soon again, Jenny dear," cried a pale, bare-footed little boy, running from the corner; "I hope the grand lady won't keep you long."

"I must seek for early violets in the hedges for you, Tommy."

"No, I don't want the violets, I want you back;" and the little thin arms were thrown round her neck, and the child's lips pressed to her cheek.

"Oh, Tommy! I wish I were a grand lady!—I wish I had plenty of money! Shouldn't you have meat enough, and all kinds of food, to make you strong and hearty again!"

"And new shoes!" suggested the child.

"And a blazing fire, and—"

"Hush, my children!" said the mother, gently, "and don't let your thoughts go run-


ning after what God Almighty has not seen good to give us. We've a-many blessings in this little cot of ours, and I always say that the three prime ones, sunshine for the eyes, hope for the heart, and love in the home, are as free to the poor as to the rich."

The sharp, cutting cold of a March wind, which drove the icy sleet against her face, did not tend to make little Jenny share her mother's spirit of contentment. She hastened up the high hill, holding her bonnet to keep it on, and wishing that she had some better protection against the blast than her thin cloak or her mother's thread-bare shawl. She was to call at the house of a milliner, for whom she was accustomed to run errands and to do little pieces of plain work, in order to carry a parcel from her to a lady who lived at the Hall about three miles distant.

Jenny arrived at the milliner's, her cheeks glowing with exercise and the cold.

"Take a seat by the fire, and warm yourself, Jenny; I've just a stitch more to put to this trimming, and the dress will be ready for you to take to Lady Grange in two minutes."

So Jenny sat down and looked on with



admiring eyes, as the finishing touch was given to a dress which, to her, appeared the very perfection of beauty and splendour.

"It must be a pleasure," thought the girl, "even to touch that lovely soft green velvet; and what must it be to wear it! I could not fancy any one's ever feeling unhappy in such a dress!"

It was a very foolish thought, certainly; but I have known people older than Jenny Green who have made reflections just as foolish. Those who suffer from the pressure of poverty are apt to forget that there are other and worse evils in the world; and that just as heavy a heart may, and often does, beat under a robe of velvet as beneath a thread-bare cloak.

The dress was finished, folded, wrapped up in linen, and confided to the girl, with many an injunction to carry it carefully, and not to loiter on the way; injunctions which Jenny conscientiously obeyed, being duly impressed with the importance of her errand and the amount of confidence reposed in her. The size of her parcel occasioned her some inconvenience: she had no longer a hand free to hold on her bonnet, which, blown

back on her shoulders, only hung by its faded ribbons, while the gale made sad untidy work with her hair. Jenny's shoes were very old, and the road steep and stony, —she became both foot-sore and tired; but her worst trouble was the uneasy, discontented thoughts, which seemed to flow into her bosom from the parcel which she carried.

“How nice and warm and comfortable it feels! I don't believe that the lady who will wear it ever knows what it is to be hungry or cold. She is never tired, for she has a fine coach to ride in,—oh! how grand it must be to ride in a coach! And then to dress like a queen, and feast on good things every day! How very, very happy she must be! I wish that I were a lady, that I do! I'd have a velvet dress of a different colour for every day in the week; and dear Tommy should have a white pony to ride on; and mother, oh! darling mother! should have everything nice that I could think of, —she should never have time to wish for anything: how happy we should all be together! But there's no use thinking about it,” added Jenny sadly, as on the crest of the

hill a sudden gust of wind almost carried her off her feet ; " I shall never be rich, nor a lady ; I shall have to work and to want all my life through."

The road now led down into the valley, where the way was comparatively sheltered. Jenny felt this to be a pleasant change, though the view was not so grand or extensive as it appeared from the higher ground. She was not, however, enough of a philosopher to remark, even had she known enough of the world to perceive, that in life, as in nature, some of the sharpest blasts are felt by those who *stand on the top of the hill*.

Jenny arrived at length at the grand outer gate, and passed with a timid step through the park, where the tall trees yet stretched leafless branches, though the tiny wild flowers at their feet were already opening their blossoms to the spring. There was a beautiful garden in front of the house ; and along its smooth gravel walks, wrapped up in velvet and furs, sauntered the lady who was mistress of the place.

She stopped to speak to the little messenger. Her manner was gracious and

gentle ; but Jenny could not help noticing how mournful was her tone ; and when she ventured to raise her eyes to the face of the lady, she saw on it an expression of melancholy and care, which raised a feeling of pity as well as of surprise. Is it upon the brow of the poor alone that we see the deep lines of sorrow ? is it the cheek of the poor alone that is furrowed by tears ? Are the merriest faces those that look from carriage windows ? can wealth shut out sorrow, sickness, bereavement, disunion, or death ?

Lady Grange noticed the tired looks of Jenny, and kindly ordered the maid whom she had summoned to receive the dress to take the girl to the kitchen, that she might have a little rest and refreshment. As Jenny, after dropping a courtesy, turned to follow the servant, her attention was arrested by the sudden clatter of horses' feet ; and three young men, laughing and racing each other up the slope, dashed along to the entrance of the Hall, the hoofs tearing up the well-rolled gravel, and the loud merry voices strangely breaking the peaceful silence which had prevailed a few minutes before. Two of the horsemen reined up at a little

distance from the lady ; while the third, who was mounted on a splendid white horse, approached the spot where she stood.

"Mother," said he, stroking the neck of his steed, which champed its bit and pawed on the ground, as if impatient to bound onward again ; "mother, I've asked Jones and Wildrake to stop to dinner to-day."

Jenny happened to glance at Lady Grange. There was an anxious frown on the gentle face, a flush on the lately pale cheek, which gave an impression of keen suffering not unmixed with anger. What Lady Grange replied to her son, or whether she replied at all, Jenny did not know ; for the lady's-maid led her towards the kitchen.

The delicious, savoury odour of that place ; the ranges of tin pans on the shelves glittering like silver ; the rows of innumerable plates and dishes,—above all, the enormous joint, slowly revolving before a fire larger than any that Jenny had ever dreamed of, for the moment put everything out of her head but the thought that it must be delightful to be very rich ! "How proud one would be, too, to have so many servants, some of them looking themselves so very grand !"

thought Jenny, as she saw various members of the household, some engaged in different occupations, some appearing as though they had nothing to do but to loiter about and gossip. An aged woman, in black bonnet and shawl, was seated at the long deal table on which the stout cook was rolling out some tempting-looking pastry. She, as Jenny soon found from the conversation going on around her, was Mrs. Dale, a nurse who had attended Lady Grange in her childhood, and who had now come from some distance on a visit to that lady, whom she had not seen since her marriage.

"Well, only think!" cried the lady's-maid who had conducted Jenny into the kitchen; "only think! here's Master Philip has brought down those two companions of his whom missus cannot abide the sight of; and they're to stay to dinner, and sleep here too, I'll warrant you! I wonder what master will say to it when he comes home."

"Mighty little peace there'll be in the house," observed the cook.

"Oh! as for peace, no one looks for it in this place!" observed the butler, who, with his hands behind him, was warming himself

at the fire. "If you'd heard all I've heard, and seen all I've seen!" and he shook his head with an air of much meaning.

"I'm afraid my poor lady has not much comfort in her son?" said the nurse, in a tone of inquiry.

"Comfort! well, I can only say that high tempers and high words,—one pulling one way, and another another,—the father trying to bridle the son, the son kicking against the authority of the father,—debts to be paid, bills to be discharged,—Sir Gilbert choosing to do neither, yet having at last to do both,—are not my notion of comfort!"

"Master Philip will break his mother's heart," said the lady's-maid; "you should see how she cries her eyes out when she's in her own room!"

"Master Philip's not such a bad fellow, after all," remarked the butler; "he'd have done well enough if he hadn't had the ill luck to be born heir to a large fortune!"

"Oh! he was spoilt from a baby!" cried the cook.

"Tisn't so much that," said the moralizing butler, seating himself by the fire and leaning back on his chair. Jenny, who, while

taking the cold meat with which she had been provided, could not avoid hearing what was passing, listened with wonder to the easy, and, as it seemed to her, the insolent manner in which the affairs of the Hall were discussed in the kitchen. She began quite to change her mind as to the advantage of keeping many servants; her simple, honest heart revolted from the treachery of their gossiping with any stranger about the most private concerns of the family which they served. "I'm glad we've our own little cot to ourselves," was the thought which crossed Jenny's mind; "and that we have not a set of people about us to watch every look, listen to every word, and make our troubles known to all the world!"

"You see," continued the butler, addressing himself to Mrs. Dale, "here's the mischief of the thing: young master found out that he was a person of mighty importance in the house, before he was high enough to look over the table. Wasn't there fireworks on his birthday, and his health drunk with three times three at the tenants' dinner at Christmas! I mind how he used to strut about, toss his head, and bully his nurse,

and smash his toys when he got tired of them; and they never pleased him more than a day! He grew older, too old for a nurse, so mistress had a tutor for him. He didn't like a tutor,—why should the heir to the estate be plagued with books and study? There was no peace till the tutor was sent off! Master found the boy getting beyond all bounds, with a mighty strong will of his own,—sent him to school. He didn't like school,—why should the heir be tormented with schooling? He was brought back after the first half, to be a plague to himself and to every one near him! So he grew up, able to settle to nothing, never finishing anything that he began,—thinking of nothing but how to kill time! He must go to London and see something of life. So to London he went; and the sharpers crowded around him as the wasps round a ripe plum. They taught him to gamble and spend money,—he was apt enough at learning that! The heir to such a fortune was a bird worth the plucking; and such gentry as those that he has brought with him to-day will stick by him while there's one golden feather left. So you see the truth of what I observed,"

said the butler in conclusion ;—" the worst luck which could have befallen young master was to be born the son of a man of fortune. If he'd had his own bread to earn, d'ye see, he'd have studied as a boy, and worked as a man, and thought of something besides pleasure ; the sharpers would have left him alone ; and he'd have turned out, may be, a mighty respectable member of society."

Mrs. Dale nodded her head very thoughtfully. She was experienced in the management of children, and in her own nursery had always laboured to maintain strict discipline ; but she knew well the disadvantages which attend a rich man's son and heir. She sat for a few moments, turning over the matter in her mind, as though the expression of her opinion on the subject could influence the future of the spoilt child of fortune. Then, with the decision of one who has maturely considered a difficult question, and has come to a satisfactory conclusion, she said, " If I were Lady Grange I know what I'd do. I'd send the boy to my own old home. Her brothers are both men of sense and spirit, who would stand no nonsense ; and if they didn't bring the young pickle to his

senses, why I'm greatly mistaken in the matter."

"Her brothers!" exclaimed cook and lady's-maid in a breath.

"Why," said the butler, "don't you know that neither of them ever enters this house?"

Mrs. Dale lifted up her hands in amazement. "Lady Grange quarrelled with her own brothers! impossible!"

"Oh! it's not mistress, but master. The worry and the distress which she has had no words can tell. Why, I don't believe that she may so much as write to her old home!"

"Dear! dear!" exclaimed the old nurse, looking really concerned; "and they were such a happy, united family; it was quite a picture to see them! Miss Clara was the darling of the house; her brothers never thought that they could make enough of their pet. Sure it must be just a heartbreak to her to be on bad terms with them now! How could such a shocking thing have happened?"


"Why, you see," said the butler, laying the finger of his right hand on the palm of his left, and lowering his voice to a more

confidential though not less audible tone, "you see it was all along of the marriage settlement. Master thought that mistress should have had more of the money—"

"Throw the money into the sea!" cried Mrs. Dale indignantly; "all the gold in the world is not worth the peace, and union, and love of a family!"

"Oh!" said the butler, "one can't be much in life without seeing how very often money matters break that peace, and union, and love. The purse on one side, the heart on the other, depend on't the purse wins the day."

"There's some truth in that," observed the cook. "My last place was with three old ladies, who lived very well and comfortably together, never separated for a day, till some one died and unluckily left them a large fortune to spend. Then they began to find out that their wills could never agree. Miss Jemima liked town, Miss Jessie the country, Miss Martha was all for the sea-side. One must travel this way for health, another that way for amusement;—before six months were over they were all divided, the establishment was broken up; and so I came here."




"Ah!" cried Mrs. Dale sadly, "fortune isn't always sent as a blessing; and where a bad use is made of it, it turns in the end to a curse! There are folk, I daresay, envying my poor lady, thinking that because she has a fine house, fine estate, fine carriage, she must be a happy woman. But well I know that—unless she be much changed from what she was as a child—she would gladly give them all up to see her son a steady, sensible, God-fearing man, and to be happy with her brothers again!"

Jenny having finished her cold meat, now rose and left the house,—left it with ideas how changed from those with which she had entered it! The feeling of envy was changed for the feeling of pity; and the young girl, as with light step she made her way towards the home where she was sure of kind smiles and a pleasant welcome, thought how much happier was her own lot than that of the lady of fortune. Even the robe of rich green velvet had lost its attractions for Jenny,—was it more beautiful than the fresh turf over which she sped with so light a heart? Her back being now turned to the wind, Jenny no longer felt its keenness; while a

brilliant sun was shedding warmth and cheerfulness around. Jenny did not forget to look in the hedges for violets for her little brother. "I daresay," thought she, as she stooped to pluck one from beneath the large green leaves, "I daresay that this sweet little flower will give my Tommy as much pleasure as the rich man's son ever found in his gilded toys. How foolish was I to wish for wealth! Who knows what effect it might have upon me! Mother is right,—the best blessings are as free to the poor as to the rich, —sunshine for the eyes, love in the home, and a good hope of heaven for the heart! *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith!*"

Ne'er will I sigh for wealth,
Such wealth as coffers can hold :
Contentment, union, and health,
Are not to be bought for gold !
The costly treasures I prize
Are treasures of family love,—
A happy home here, and the hope so dear
Of a happier home above !

Equally shines the beam
On palace or cottage wall ;
The golden rays they stream
To brighten and gladden all !



THE GREEN VELVET DRESS.

But, oh ! the sunshine I prize
Is the sunshine of family love,
A happy home here, and the hope so dear
Of a happier home above !

The poor no flatterers fear,
They dread no plunderer's art :
When the voice of kindness they hear,
They feel it comes from the heart !
Oh ! ask the blessing from Heaven,
The blessing of family love,
A happy home here, and the hope so dear
Of a happier home above !

THE BEAUTIFUL VILLA.

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain : but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."—Prov. xxxi. 30.

JESSIE WARNER stood before a pier-glass, gazing on the image reflected in it with silent delight. And truly the image was a very pretty one, though perhaps not all the world would have admired it as much as the vain young lady. She had twined a wreath of flowers in her luxuriant tresses, and smoothed every ringlet till it lay on her fair neck bright as burnished gold. She was smiling at the form in the mirror, which smiled again, displaying an even row of pearly teeth ; and Jessie was evidently too much charmed with her occupation to give a thought to the pile of lesson-books which lay unopened on the table, or the unfinished

jacket beside it, which her lazy little fingers had failed in a whole month to complete.

Mrs. Warner entered unobserved by Jessie, and that which made the young daughter smile cost the mother a sigh.

"My poor child is so much engaged in contemplating her own pretty face, that everything else is neglected and forgotten." Such were the reflections of Mrs. Warner. "Oh! how shall I teach her the comparative worthlessness of that which is only skin-deep,—that which time must impair, and any hour may destroy?"

She moved forward a few steps, and her reflection in the glass first made Jessie aware of her presence.

"O mamma!" she exclaimed, "I did not know that you were there!" and a blush rose to Jessie's cheek at being discovered in the act of admiring her own beauty. Mrs. Warner glanced at the books and the work, but made no observation on the subject, and merely asked her daughter if she were inclined for a walk, and would like to accompany her to a house at some distance, where she was about to pay a visit on business.

"I should like it of all things!" cried

Jessie, hastily divesting her head of its gay wreath—so hastily that many of the flower-petals were strewed on the floor.

“These were very bright and beautiful to-day; what will they be to-morrow?” observed the lady.

Jessie made no reply, but hastened to put on her bonnet and shawl.

Mrs. Warner gave her daughter an allowance for her dress; Jessie was therefore able to choose it herself, and please her own taste in the selection. It must be owned that her attire was more remarkable for the gaiety of its colours than for the goodness of its materials, that more attention was paid to its being becoming than to its being comfortable, and that money was often wasted upon some expensive piece of finery when some necessary article of dress was required. Jessie's bonnet was now radiant with pink bows and flowers, and pretty bracelets adorned her arms, while her gloves were so old that the fingers looked through them, and her shoes were so much trodden down at heel that she could not help shuffling as she walked. Jessie was in actual want of a good common dress, in which she could run

about the garden and play with her young companions without fear of causing rent or stain; but she had chosen one of a tint so delicate and a fabric so fragile that she never while wearing it felt at her ease.

Mrs. Warner and her daughter pursued their way along green shady lanes and across daisy-dotted meadows, with nothing to mar the pleasure of their walk except the brambles in the former, which were always catching in poor Jessie's flounces, and the stiles in the latter, which her tight dress made her find difficulty in crossing. Jessie and her mother arrived at last at an exceedingly beautiful spot. On an emerald lawn, embosomed in trees, stood a villa which might have been the abode of a fairy, so tasteful was its form, so graceful its fanciful minarets, so elegant its windows of stained glass overhung with clusters of roses and jasmine. A splendid passion-flower twined round one of the slender carved pillars of the porch; another was half hidden by clematis. In the centre of the building rose an ornamental clock-tower, whose gilded pinnacle glittered in the sun. In her admiration of its fanciful beauty, Jessie did not notice that the hands

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of the gay clock pointed to a wrong hour, for its works were motionless and out of order.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "what a lovely place! How delightful it would be to live here! How proud one would be if it were one's own!"

"It is pretty enough on the outside," said Mrs. Warner rather dryly; "but with houses, as with those who live in them, it is not sufficient to look only at the *face*; we must examine further before we decide whether they are subjects either for pride or for admiration."

They entered the pretty porch, and Mrs. Warner pulled the bell-handle. It was broken, and came off in her hand; so, seeing that the door was open, the lady walked into the house.

Strangely different from what the exterior had led her to expect Jessie found the inside of the dwelling. It bore every token of neglect and disrepair, as if either uninhabited, or occupied by those who paid no attention to neatness and comfort. The plaster had partly peeled from the walls, there was not a carpet upon the floors, and the dust lay so thick upon them that the visitors' footsteps



left prints behind. There was a sad lack of chairs and tables, even of the commonest kind, in the sitting-room, which Mrs. Warner entered, in hope of finding a more efficient bell. Jessie sat down on a bench, and had a narrow escape of falling to the ground, for one of the legs gave way beneath even her light weight.

"What a shame to furnish such a pretty house so badly!" she exclaimed. "I never saw a place so neglected. Just look at the dull, spotted picture-frames, and the dirty cobwebs across the corners of the room! What is the use of having a beautiful house, if nothing but rubbish is in it?"

"What is the use indeed!" replied Mrs. Warner, trying again the effect of pulling the old bell-rope. "But houses are not the only things which need furnishing; and yet I fancy that there is some one not far from me who occasionally acts as though she thought that it matters not how empty a head may be, so that it looks well to the eye."

"O mamma!" cried Jessie laughing, yet half vexed, "heads and houses are such different things!"

"To my idea," replied Mrs. Warner, "an unfurnished mind is much like an unfurnished house, only a much sadder object. Youth is the time above all other to fit up the intellect richly. We may then lay in an almost boundless store of valuable information, increasing with every day of our lives, for none are too old to learn."

"But study is so tiresome," sighed Jessie.

"It costs us something, my dear; like rich furniture, it is not to be had for the mere wishing. But it is well worth the trouble which it costs. And remember, Jessie, with the mind, as with the house, it cannot be *entirely* empty. Where knowledge is neglected, folly will come; the dust gathers, the spider spins her web. If we are not learning, we are losing; a mind left to itself is a mind left to decay."

"I wonder if any one lives here," said Jessie, who was rather desirous to turn the conversation. "No one takes the trouble to answer the bell."

"I believe that we shall find Madame L'Ame in one of the upper rooms," replied her mother. "She knows me well, and therefore will not regard my visit as an in-

trusion ; besides, to-day she expects me, as I have to speak to her on important business regarding a large property to which she is heir."

Mrs. Warner, therefore, followed by her daughter, proceeded up the dusty uncarpeted stair, Jessie feeling some curiosity to see the mistress of the beautiful but neglected mansion. They reached the landing-place, where Mrs. Warner knocked at the door of one of the upper rooms. As the sound brought no answer, the lady knocked again, when a shrill voice bade her "come in ;" and she and Jessie entered an apartment as unsightly as the rest of the interior of the house. There was not, perhaps, the same deficiency of furniture, but everything was in confusion and disorder, as it might be heaped together in the warehouse of a broker. At one corner of the room a maid-servant on her knees was engaged in cutting out pictures from old magazines of fashion, figures of slender-waisted belles and coxcomical-looking beaux, and pasting them on a large screen. This Jessie observed when she had a little leisure to look around her, but at first her attention was engaged by the mistress of the house, who advanced to meet Mrs. Warner.

Madame L'Ame was very much stunted in size, so much so as to appear almost a dwarf; and she looked shorter than she really was from a habit of constant stooping. She seldom raised her eyes from the ground, but moved them restlessly to and fro, as if always searching for something on the floor. Her mouth, which she usually kept a little open, had a vacant, silly expression, which gave Jessie an idea at first sight that the lady possessed a very small share of sense. The young girl was confirmed in this impression by Madame L'Ame's conduct during the whole of the visit.

Notwithstanding the very serious and important business upon which Mrs. Warner soon entered—business which concerned the lady's title to succeed to an immense property, and even her claim to all that she then possessed—Madame L'Ame appeared as though she thought the subject not worthy a moment's attention. She was constantly interrupting Mrs. Warner with some frivolous remark which had nothing to do with the question at issue. She was far more taken up with the tricks and gambols of Plaisir, her petted and pampered monkey,

than she was with business on which might depend her future wealth or absolute beggary. The screen also occupied much of her attention, and Madame L'Ame often interrupted the flow of her childish gossip to give directions to the maid about placing the pictures upon it.

"My dear madam," said Mrs. Warner earnestly, after concluding a statement which would have appeared interesting to any one but the person chiefly concerned, "it is now high time for you to take a decided part. Your enemies are powerful and active, your claim doubtful—"

"Now, does he not look droll?" exclaimed Madame L'Ame, who had twisted a gauze scarf over the head of her favourite, and was laughing at his efforts to free himself from his veil.

"Really this is no time for trifling," said the visitor, "when so much is at stake. I have been informed that—"

"Mabel, Mabel!" cried the lady to her maid, "bring these dancing figures more to the front—there—and the coloured flowers to form a pretty border round them;" and she started up from her seat to show the

exact spot on the screen which she wished to have decorated by the woodcuts.

Mrs. Warner's usually serene countenance showed signs of impatience and annoyance. They had quite passed away, however, before the lady returned to her seat.

"I really must beg for half-an-hour of your earnest, undivided attention," said the visitor. "I have walked some distance on purpose to let you know the full extent of the evil which threatens you."

Madame L'Ame's eyes were wandering curiously over the dress of Jessie, — her bonnet, her bracelets, her flounces; and at the first pause in her visitor's address she inquired, "Pray, who is your milliner, my dear?"

Mrs. Warner rose in despair. She had given up all hope of engaging the mind of her weak and frivolous acquaintance on anything beyond the trifles of the hour. She quitted the apartment and the house, but not before Madame L'Ame had detailed to her all the petty gossip of the neighbourhood, and asked her opinion on various important subjects, such as the fit of a glove or the tint of a ribbon.

"Mamma!" exclaimed Jessie when they stepped out into the open air, glad to escape from society so insipid, "who would ever have believed Madame L'Ame to be the owner of so beautiful a house? Surely she is quite out of her mind."

"She is weak in her intellect, I fear."

"Weak!—O mamma, I do not believe that she has any intellect at all! She seemed to think more of that monkey than of all the splendid fortune of which you were telling her; and I do believe that she would care more about losing a few of her paltry beads and pictures than for forfeiting a kingdom, if she had one. I never saw any one so silly."

"Ah, my child!" said Mrs. Warner quietly, "let us take care that we ourselves are not betrayed into greater and more fatal folly. If it is sad to see the mere outward appearance alone regarded, the furnishing of the mind neglected, how much sadder to see *the soul*, unworthy mistress of a beautiful mansion, itself unlovely and stunted, devoted to trifles unworthy its regard, while its highest interests are forgotten! Have we never met with one to whom the most important of all

subjects appeared tedious and uninteresting, —who cared more for the amusement of the moment than the happiness of ages to come? whom serious conversation only wearied, though it might regard a future crown to be inherited or lost, and who would rather listen to any tale of idle gossip than to a message of *glad tidings* from heaven?"

Jessie walked home silent and reflecting. For the first time in her life she thought less of the "cottage of clay" which she had so delighted to adorn than of the dweller therein—the immortal soul.

Many years passed away before Jessie had occasion again to revisit the beautiful villa embosomed in trees. It looked changed, for the season was that of winter. The lovely creepers showed neither blossoms nor leaves; the gilded pinnacle of the clock-tower had been blown down by a gale; but the clock itself had been long since repaired, and was keeping good time, and striking the hour on its silvery bell, like a brave spirit on a round of daily duty. And cheerfully blazed the fires in the neat and well-furnished rooms. Their former occupant had died in poverty many years before. Her very memory had

almost passed away from the place in which she had dwelt. A happy, united family now inhabited the beautiful home; the ringing laugh of childhood was heard there, pleasant and sweet to the ear, but not so pleasant or sweet as the sound of the hymn which rose morning and eve from the happy abode to Him from whom all happiness flows.

The house was much changed when Jessie revisited it; but Jessie herself was more changed than the house. The pretty child, as often happens, had not grown into the beautiful woman; and sickness, time, and care had robbed her of all trace of good looks. The rounded cheek has become hollow, the rose colour has faded, the sparkling eyes have lost all their brightness; and yet Jessie is now far more agreeable as a companion, and far more valued as a friend—more loved in her family, more happy in her own mind, than she ever was when lovely and young. A gentle, cheerful, loving spirit dwells in the faded form, and sheds a light on homely features which makes them more than fair. The beauty which passes away like a flower is exchanged for *the beauty of holiness*, which never fades, which never

dies, but finds its perfection in heaven.
*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but
a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be
praised.*

The unsightly shell
A pearl may enshrine,
In homely form dwell
A spirit divine.
Oh ! favour's deceitful,
And beauty is vain ;
But virtue's the pearl
Which will precious remain.

The weed's scarlet dye
Outshineth the corn,
Yet gladdens no eye,
To no garner is borne.
Oh ! favour's deceitful,
And beauty is vain ;
But virtue's rich harvest
Will precious remain.

What matters what hue
To the eye has been given,
If the soul that looks through
Wear the beauty of heaven ?
Oh ! favour's deceitful,
And comeliness vain ;
But virtue for ever
Will lovely remain.



